

Rector's Report for August 2026 Vestry Meeting

A recap of events/activities/goings-on since the report for our June vestry meeting.

Wider Church/Community: Trinity was the site of the celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday in Santa Barbara, and I was invited to offer the welcome to the large and diverse group that was gathered. // I met with Imam Wael Hagazy of the Islamic Society of Santa Barbara (ISSB) to work out plans for his visit to Trinity to preach. // I attended the consecration of Bishop Antonio Gallardo in Pasadena, and was pleased to be part of the group that "presented" Antonio (the Bishop Search Committee plus members of the Standing Committee were Antonio's "presenters") // Trinity hosted an Interfaith book study and potluck with members of the Islamic Society. // And yet more interfaith work...I met with Rabbi Daniel Brenner, the senior rabbi at Congregation B'Nai B'rith, to talk about ways for our congregations to interact and get to know each other. One of the possibilities is a "pulpit swap" (made easier for our 2 congregations because our primary services are on different days!)

Worship: Imam Wael from ISSB preached at Trinity in July, after chanting a portion of the Qu'ran (subbed in for the Epistle). Following the 10am service, we hosted a brunch for Trinity folks and visitors from ISSB - a wonderful morning! // Theo Patterson and Phylene Wiggins organized a "service of lament" inspired by a sermon Theo gave this past Lent. People were invited to first walk the labyrinth, if they wanted to, accompanied by a singing bowl "sound bath" presented by one of the instructors at Breathe and Bloom Yoga. A service followed in the sanctuary, with music, scripture, reflection, and ritual - all focusing on personal and/or communal lament. // I'm working on plans for our upcoming bishop visitation on 9/20. At this point, we have 18 people - adults and teens - who will be confirmed or received.

Financial Things: Been working with the consultants at Vandersall Collective about our Money Narrative Retreat (writing this report just after the retreat!), and the strategic filter. As part of that process, I facilitated discussions with parishioners about core values after the 8am and 10am services on 8/16. // Been meeting with staff and others who have budget line item responsibilities, to help put together the 2027 draft budget - the "big number" we need as our target for Annual Giving pledge campaign. We've also been meeting to plan all the tactical pieces of annual giving, i.e. kickoff dinner, pledge packets, etc. At the Vestry meeting on 8/26, the Vestry will see the plan all laid out, including places where leadership's help is needed! // The Cookie Walk team met during the summer to talk through plans for our 6TH ANNUAL Cookie Walk this December, including some improvements we wanted to make to optimize flow through the space. We ended up doing a trial set-up - with all the tables we'll be using - in the Guild and Parish Halls, with input from all the different constituencies that are

part of Cookie Walk (i.e. does the layout work for the cookie concierges? The team that weighs the cookies? The check-out people? The raffle and raffle ticket sellers? Etc.)

Adult Formation: The adult formation team met to plan the upcoming program year, including plans for Lent 2027, the Lenten Reflection booklet, a Soul of Aging series, centering prayer, a book study of a Brian McLaren book, as well as all the formation groups that are ongoing.

Newcomer/Pastoral Care: Over the past several weeks, I've met with 19 people for newcomer or pastoral care visits.

Miscellany: Kyle from Santa Barbara Stoneworks visited Trinity for their annual inspection of the tower, and I was able to join him. Good news is that all looks good - no new loose pieces, and Kyle doesn't expect anything else happening anytime soon (but it's still good to do the annual inspection). // I worked with Brian Bargiel and Tom Patterson - with input from the security experts at SecurePro - to put together a grant application for FEMA money to increase security on Trinity's campus. (A workshop I attended several months ago, put on by the national church, mentioned the availability of these funds.) We should hear by the end of September, I believe, whether we'll receive any grant money, and if we're turned down, we can re-apply (I know several other churches in the LA Diocese applied multiple times before they were awarded any funds. // For Continuing Education, Sarah's and my involvement with the Austin Story Project continues, and I've been attending a once-a-month online course with Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, about the persistence of anti-semitism in Christian churches, particularly around liturgy and preaching.

Personal: I won't be at the August Vestry meeting because I'll be on vacation with my family (including my kid!!) in Michigan, and visiting my dad in Ohio. // I enjoyed a wonderful evening of insightful humor with Trevor Noah at the SB Bowl. // I also enjoyed a visit - albeit very brief! - with Diana Small (and baby Manny and partner, Jessie) when she was in town for a presentation she was giving at Westmont.

Respectfully submitted,
August 22, 2026
Elizabeth+

Associate Rector Report, August 2026 Vestry Mtg.

Parish Council

Parish Council always takes July off, so it was good to be back together for our August meeting. We did a formation exercise around images and how God is moving in each of the councils. We kept the Invite/Welcome/Connect initiative alive in our various check-ins and questions. This group attended the Leadership Retreat as well.

Justice and Outreach Council (JOC)

Co-chairs Brian Bargiel and Ralph Armbruster and I meet monthly as a little JOC executive committee to plan upcoming meeting agendas. The JOC met twice since our last Vestry meeting and new members are feeling integrated and good movement is being made. A decision was made to divvy up justice grants into 4 equal categories: Immigration, Climate, Basic Needs, and Other. JOC will continue to also give grants to its 4 historic ministries. Next month JOC will begin the discernment as to which organizations fit into those categories and how much to contribute to each. JOC is also working on developing liaisons between JOC members and ministry leaders within Trinity in an effort to create more connection between the parish and the members of JOC. JOC is becoming more of a working council, which is terrific.

Supper Club is going well. We continue to have a nice rotation of regular volunteers and new people. Same goes for Transition House.

Adult Formation

I attended our adult formation brainstorming session (which we call the Orca Pod), in which we mapped out the coming year. Good things are in store!

Vestry members Lucy Bell and Michelle Petty have been working with Elizabeth and I on a project around Black history in Santa Barbara. Stay tuned.

Pastoral Care

I meet with many parishioners to offer pastoral care at home, in my office, in the hospital, and at coffee shops. The Bouquet Blessings ministry is going well, and parishioner Elizabeth Patterson has agreed to more formally take on leadership of this vital ministry. A small group of lay eucharistic visitors bring Communion to people in their homes, as do I. There are still plenty of prayer shawls ready to be given, and we are still in need of a lay leader for this ministry. Norma Stuck is available to pass the baton. I have taken on the organizing of the monthly Samarkand Eucharist visits. It is a rotation between Michael Corrigan, Jim Sprague, Elizabeth, and myself.

Compline

During our summer Compline break, I have been working on lining up storytellers for the fall. We have wonderful people on the slate! Put September 13 into your calendar as a very special storyteller (Pico Iyer) will be with us. We aren't allowed to publicize his name on our website or newsletter due to his contract with UCSB Arts and Lectures, but I'm putting it here!

Annual Giving

Elizabeth, Betty, Nollie Lei, Isao Sugano, and I have been planning the Annual Giving theme and timeline. Good things in store.

Sacraments

I officiated at the wedding of Mac McNeel's daughter Sierra last weekend at the Botanical Garden. I am currently working with one other couple to plan their wedding at Trinity in October.

Personal

It was wonderful to get away in July to visit Maddie in London and travel around a bit with my family! We also got to spend some time in northern Idaho with Mitch's side of the family. I am grateful for the opportunity to have gotten away for some time of rest and play. It is hard to believe that the Fall has begun as Gwyneth has already started school and even has her Driver's Learner's Permit! Strap your seat belts!

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Sarah Thomas, Associate Rector

JUNIOR WARDEN
REPORT TO VESTRY

August, 2026

Lay days of summer. No Vestry meeting last month and lots of folks away on vacations, etc.

While Building and Grounds Committee has not been meeting the past month, Patsy and Stephen have been busy. We did meet – without Chris – on Friday the 21st of August. I will be reporting at the Vestry meeting next week on the work in progress. One note here; we have approximately \$120,000 of window work that needs to be done. Building and Grounds would like to begin scheduling it. The cost would likely be spread over two or three years.

I have been meeting with a small group of our parishioners with Vandersall Consulting on the program to adopt better skills at decision making. The overriding theme, I think, is; keeping every decision in the context of how it impacts – hopefully furthers – the values and goals of Trinity.

And now, of course, we are in the midst of our leadership retreat. Last night, in response to an exercise we did, I had a revelation of sorts regarding how my experience as a child growing up in a ranching family home with “feast or famine” cycles contributed to my life-long attitudes about money. Interested to see where we go today (Saturday).

On Tuesday, 18 August I attended a meeting of our Executive Committee. Also in attendance were; Sarah McCarter, Clerk; (by Zoom) Keith Cobell, Treasurer; Sarah Thomas, Associate Rector, and Elizabeth Molitors, Rector. We discussed the agenda for the upcoming Vestry meeting. All in all, it was a productive meeting with good discussion.

Respectfully,
Michael Neal Arnold
Junior Warden

Treasurer's Report to the Vestry

August 26, 2026

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Snapshot: June-July 2026

Income and Expenses	Actual July	Budget July	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	60,998	77,500	640,137	672,087
Expenses	70,469	87,642	606,077	632,222
Net Income	(9,471)	(10,142)	34,060	39,865

Analysis

- **Pledge giving has slowed noticeably this summer.** Through May, pledge payments were coming in at about \$85,000 a month. In June and July, that dropped to about \$42,000 a month - roughly half. We're now about \$38,000 behind where we expected to be at this point in the year, and that gap doubled in July alone. Summer slowdowns are normal in parish life, but this one is a little deeper than our budget anticipated.
- **Careful spending has kept us in balance so far but there is work ahead of us.** Our staff has held expenses below budget in nearly every area, so despite the giving shortfall we're still slightly ahead for the year overall. Much of that savings is timing rather than true savings: our choir section leaders return in the fall, deferred building repairs still need doing, and continuing education for our clergy hasn't been spent yet. Those costs will arrive in the last few months of the year, and if giving stays soft, the year won't finish in balance.
- **We have significant assets, but most of it is money we can freely spend.** Trinity's total assets are about \$4.1 million. A lot of that is restricted - endowments and gifts that donors designated for specific purposes and that we are obligated to honor. The money available for everyday operations is about \$337,000, and our operating checking account covers roughly two and a half months of expenses. Our investments also dipped about \$20,000 in July with the markets: normal volatility - not a cause for alarm.
- **Our building and improvement projects are moving ahead, and we're watching the funding.** The capital projects fund holds about \$99,000, while the projects currently in the pipeline - the library and audiovisual work, window protection, the phone system, rectory repairs, and others - total somewhat more than that. This is a normal thing for a vestry to manage, and we're sequencing the work so commitments stay within available funds.
- **What this means:** Trinity is not in trouble - but we are, however, at the point in the year where the fall giving season matters a great deal. If you've fallen behind on your pledge, catching up between now and December is one of the single most helpful things you can do!